

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of controlling access to resources, said method
5 comprising:
storing a policy decision for a resource in local memory, said policy
decision received from a source of policy definitions, said policy decision based
on a policy definition governing access to said resource and on requestor
identifying information provided to said source;
10 receiving a request for access to said resource, said request comprising
said requestor identifying information; and
evaluating said request using said policy decision in said local memory
instead of referring said request to said source for evaluation.
- 15 2. The method of Claim 1 wherein said resource is affiliated with
another resource, and wherein further a policy decision for said other resource
is received from said source and stored in local memory.
- 20 3. The method of Claim 1 further comprising:
receiving from said source a notification of a change in said policy
definition.
4. The method of Claim 3 wherein said notification identifies
resources affected by said change.
- 25 5. The method of Claim 3 wherein said notification also comprises an
updated version of said policy decision based on said change.

6. The method of Claim 3 further comprising:

marking said policy decision subject to said change; and

requesting an updated version of said policy decision in response to a

5 subsequent request for said resource.

7. The method of Claim 1 further comprising:

sending a message to said source, said message requesting updates for
policy decisions stored in said memory.

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8. The method of Claim 1 wherein a period of time said policy

decision is valid is also received from said source and stored locally.

9. The method of Claim 1 wherein a condition associated with said

15 policy definition is also received from said source and stored locally, wherein
said condition is enforced locally.

10. A method of controlling access to resources, said method
comprising:

20 receiving a request for access to a resource, said request comprising
requestor identifying information, wherein said request is referred to a source of
a policy definition that governs access to said resource for evaluation;

receiving from said source a policy decision for said resource, said policy
decision based on said policy definition and said requestor identifying

25 information; and

storing said policy decision in local memory, wherein a subsequent request for said resource is evaluated locally using said policy decision stored in memory.

5 11. The method of Claim 10 wherein said resource is affiliated with another resource, wherein a policy decision for said other resource is received from said source and stored in local memory.

10 12. The method of Claim 10 further comprising:
receiving from said source a notification of a change in said policy definition.

15 13. The method of Claim 12 wherein said notification identifies resources affected by said change.

14. The method of Claim 12 wherein said notification also comprises an updated version of said policy decision based on said change.

20 15. The method of Claim 12 further comprising:
marking said policy decision subject to said change; and
requesting an updated version of said policy decision in response to a subsequent request for said resource.

25 16. The method of Claim 10 further comprising:
sending a message to said source, said message requesting updates to policy decisions stored in said memory.

17. The method of Claim 10 further comprising:
receiving information that identifies a period of time said policy decision
is valid.

5 18. The method of Claim 10 further comprising:
receiving from said source a condition associated with said policy
definition, wherein said condition is enforced locally.

10 19. A computer-usable medium having computer-readable program
code embodied therein for causing a computer system to perform a method of
controlling access to resources, said method comprising:
storing in memory a policy decision for a first resource, said policy
decision received from a source of policy definitions, said policy decision based
on a policy definition governing access to said first resource and on requestor
15 identifying information provided to said source;
receiving a request for access to said first resource, said request
comprising said requestor identifying information; and
evaluating said request using said policy decision stored in said memory
instead of referring said request to said source for evaluation.

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20. The computer-usable medium of Claim 19 wherein said first
resource is affiliated with another resource, wherein a policy decision for said
other resource is received from said source and stored in local memory.

25 21. The computer-usable medium of Claim 19 wherein said computer-
readable program code embodied therein causes said computer system to
perform said method comprising:

receiving from said source a notification of a change in said policy definition.

22. The computer-usable medium of Claim 19 wherein said computer-readable program code embodied therein causes said computer system to perform said method comprising:

 sending a message to said source, said message requesting updates for policy decisions stored in said memory.

23. The computer-usable medium of Claim 19 wherein a period of time said policy decision is valid is also received from said source and stored locally.

24. The computer-usable medium of Claim 19 wherein a condition associated with said policy definition is also received from said source and stored locally, wherein said condition is enforced locally.

25. The computer-usable medium of Claim 19 wherein said computer-readable program code embodied therein causes said computer system to perform said method comprising:

 receiving a request for access to a second resource, said request comprising said requestor identifying information;

 providing said requestor identifying information to a source of a policy definition that governs access to said second resource;

 receiving from said source a policy decision for said second resource, said policy decision for said second resource based on said policy definition

that governs said second resource and said requestor identifying information;
and

storing said policy decision for said second resource in said memory,
wherein a subsequent request for said second resource is evaluated using said
5 policy decision stored in said memory.